

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE WOOD RIVER WATERSHED ADVISORY GROUP

CAREY CITY HALL

TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2004 - 7:30 P.M.

Chairman Daryle James called the meeting to order with the following in attendance:

Jerry Nance – Lincoln County	Bill Hazen – Uofl Extension Gooding Cty
Bob Simpson – City of Carey	Kevin Davidson – NRCS
Chuck Pentzer – SCC	Clint Krahn – Logging
Lynn Harmon – Flood Control & Recharge	Stephan Frenzl – Wood River Land Trust
Corinna Frenzl – Blaine County	Carol Blackburn – Conservation
Roger Parker – City of Hailey	Bryan Ravenscroft – Logging
Mike Etcheverry – IDEQ	Jennifer Claire – IDEQ
Daryle James	Vern Ravenscroft

Minutes: Minutes for the June 22, 2004 meeting were reviewed. A motion was made to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded. Motion carried; vote was unanimous.

UPDATE ON WATER ISSUES – Vern Ravenscroft

The water recharge recommendations were discussed at the meeting held in Fairfield in June but because there wasn't a quorum present, the issue was tabled. Since that time, Vern has had the opportunity to visit with some of the people that were absent from that meeting. Vern has also had the opportunity to visit with the individual from Idaho Power who handles their water rights issues and planning. He has also got in touch with the Idaho Department of Water Resources to get some update and reliable data as to the potential. As far as Idaho Power is concerned, they are willing to work with the WAG and to participate in any coordination meetings. They said they would be quite adamant to be involved in anything to do with (1) the Swan Falls Agreement, which has legislative ratifications and (2) their water rights, which are senior to anything that has been proposed for recharge. Beyond that, they said that there were surplus waters over many instances in which flood waters occurred that were over and above those basic water rights and they would participate in discussing and trying to arrive at something that was amicable. They further said that they felt that it was the only way that we were going to get anything done in the question of recharge. Secondly, in looking at the potential, Vern got the flow duration information updated from the standpoint from the station down at the lower end of the Malad River, Station 13152500 Malad River near Gooding. Vern reviewed with the group the flow data information for the Murphy gauge on the Snake River, which is the governing gauge in so far as the Swan Falls Agreement is concerned. The data is encouraging. The input from Idaho Power and these substantiating records from IDWR convinces Vern that the WAG should go ahead and adopt a resolution that they are willing to take a role of leadership in this to get the parties together and get them talking to see what kind of agreement can come forth. Then determine whether that need be a legislative endorsement or ratification or whether it can be something that is done by inter-agency and inter-group agreement and policy to get something beneficial to hopefully stabilize and at least in part solve this very major problem of what happens if we continue to deplete the aquifer. It is an opportunity for the WAG to take a leadership position and certainly from the standpoint of the economy of our area and the quality of our water, it would be beneficial.

Daryle read a letter from Jo Lowe asking a couple of questions be addressed at this meeting. The first question is "why is this a WAG issue". Mike Etcheverry answers by stating that she makes a very valid point. I'm not here to say that the WAG cannot delve into some other things but the mission and focus of the Watershed Advisory Group, the way that it was set up under the legislature, is for water quality issues from the TMDL process. Now we're talking about groundwater quality issues and who's to say it would be a problem if we endorsed it. Bill Hazen: One of the things we need to realize is on the Wood River a major erosion problem occurs when you have these huge flows because a good share of the sediment moves. Flow management can be a function of maintaining stream quality. The other thing that we look at is if we do divert high flow kind of things we will keep springs flowing more uniformly which is going to help quality,

temperature and a whole bunch of things. I was always of the opinion that quality and quantity were two separate issues, but I don't think that is true. When we see high flows, that is when we see erosion, many times. If we can do something that does that, then we can have an impact with quality along with quantity. The issues kind of go together even though they are not explicitly tied together. Vern Ravenscroft: I think the crutch to the resolution that we are considering is that we merely serve as the spark to get this thing into a coordination procedure where eventually someone else will have the responsibility and a number of people need to have input. In looking at quality, the stabilization and the avoidance of the depreciation of the springs up and down the Snake River and at the lower end of the Malad River certainly is a water quality question.

The second question is "on discussing this question with Alan Merritt from IDWR, it would seem unlikely that the aquifer that feeds available springs area will recover much until groundwater usage is limited instead of expanded, which is what has been happening since the 1950's. Is the future possibility of enough excess water to divert to aquifer recharge enough to justify the considerable cost of construction, maintenance and monitoring?" Vern Ravenscroft: I would respond to that with the fact that there is already a major recharge area that is established. Secondly, the Groundwater Pumpers Association has been looking for others and there are several that can be developed for a very minimal figure. So the investment as far as facilities are concerned is not extreme. Secondly, the rough draft work that Jeff Martin did and I reviewed indicates that on an average you do have this potential somewhere upwards on 80,000 acre feet which is a significant contribution towards the stabilization of that groundwater resource.

A motion was made for someone to be assigned to write a letter of recommendation in support of the groundwater recharge and forward that to the appropriate organizations. (A rough draft of the resolution was presented at the meeting in Fairfield and was forwarded by e-mail to the Board Members. The rough draft needs to be reproduced and a hard copy needs forwarded to the entire Committee before the next meeting.) The motion was seconded. Motion carried. Vote unanimous.

IMPLEMENTATION VIDEO –INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN WATER SUPPLY, WATER QUALITY, ECONOMIC VITALITY & QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

MIKE ETCHEVERRY-IDEQ

What I've got tonight is a video that I recently received from the EPA. It was co-produced by the EPA and the Weather Channel. I thought it would be somewhat interesting to the WAG because it talks about groundwater and it talks about water treatment through wetlands. It is through three major areas in the United States. You can see that we've got problems but comparatively speaking not like they have in some other areas. (Attached to the minutes is an information sheet explaining where you can order this video or several other related print documents.)

The August meeting will be on the 24th and will be held in Fairfield at 7:30 p.m. The September meeting will be on the 28th and will be held in Carey at 7:30 p.m.

The environmental impact study for the Little Wood Project has been completed. NRCS has contracted CH2M Hill to do the design on the project. There will be a public meeting on Thursday, August 5th at 7:00 p.m. at the Carey High School.

Where upon the meeting was adjourned.

Daryle James, Chairman